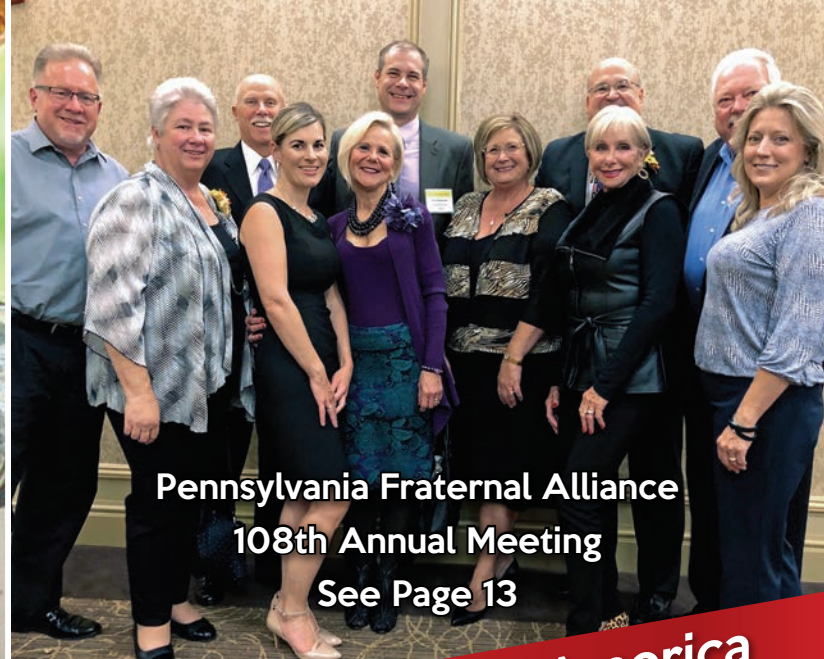




NSS Life
Family Matters...

**2019 Required
 Minimum Distribution
 Withdrawal Deadline
 See Page 6 for Details**



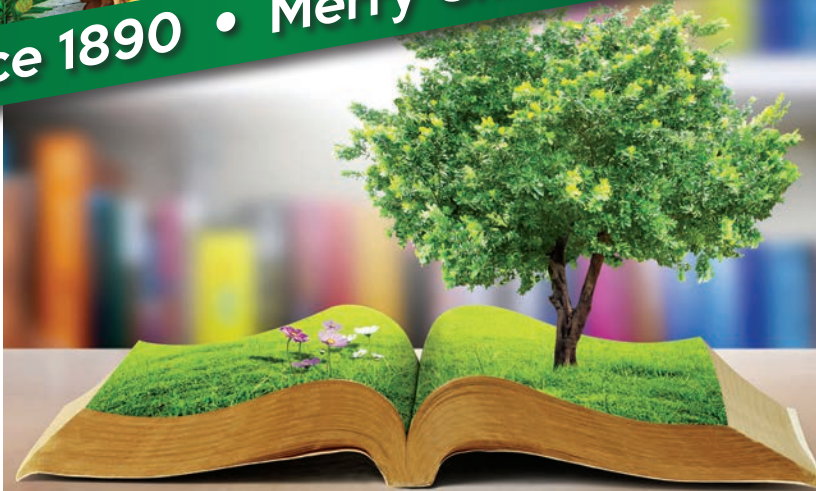
**Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance
 108th Annual Meeting
 See Page 13**

The National Slovak Society of the United States of America

National News

Fraternal Life Insurance Since 1890 • Merry Christmas!

**2019 Christmas Ornament Contest
 Deadline Extended to December 15, 2019**



**Youth Poetry Contest 3rd Place Winners
 See Page 18 for Poems**

**NÁRODNÉ NOVINY
 DECEMBER 2019 | NUMBER 3536 VOLUME 111**



National Slovak Society

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EDITOR

LORI CROWLEY

Published Monthly

Send articles for publication to:

351 Valley Brook Road

McMurray, PA 15317-3337

Deadline: 5th of preceding month

NSS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

David G. Blazek, *FIC, President, CEO & Elder*

Joseph Stefka, Jr., *Chairman of the Board*

Linda M. Strom, *Secretary/Treasurer, CFO*

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Reverend Monsignor Thomas V. Banick,
Spiritual Advisor

ROCWMAS HONORARY OFFICER

Olga Kasnot, *President*

FSWFE and PBU merged with NSS in 1997
ROCWMAS merged with the NSS in 1998

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Activities At A Glance

REGION 2

January 12, 2020

Assemblies L075, 0617

Assembly L075, Holiday Party, Terry's Diner, Birney Avenue, Moosic, PA at 2:00 pm

REGION 5

December 1
December 1
December 1-15
December 15
March 8, 2020
June 14, 2020
September 13, 2020
December 6, 2020

Assemblies P38A, 0039, 0100, L105, 0108, 0123, L161, 0377, 0434, 0441, 0588, 0737, 0774

Assembly 0039, Annual Christmas Party, K of C Hall at 1:00 pm
Assembly 0377, Annual Holiday Party, Cannons Chophouse, Canonsburg, PA at 3:00 pm
Assembly 0588, NSS Fraternal Project, Blessings in a Backpack, Avella High School
Assembly 0123, Christmas Party, Camody's Restaurant, Neville Island, PA at 1:00 pm
Assembly 0039, Lenten Dinner, Eat'n Park Restaurant at 6:00 pm
Assembly 0039, Summer Bar-B-Q, K of C Picnic Pavilion
Assembly 0039, Remembering Flight 93, Eat'n Park Restaurant
Assembly 0039, Annual Christmas Party, K of C Social Hall

REGION 8

December 1
December 10

Assemblies 0004, 0070, 0160, 0432, 0595

Assembly 070, Christmas Party/Meeting, Dr. Martin Luther Church, Brooklyn, OH at 1:00 pm
Assembly 0432, Meeting, Tony K's, Berea, OH at 7:30 pm

REGION 14

December 8

Assemblies R059, L102

Assembly R059, Christmas Gathering/Meeting, Keysock's residence

REGION 15

Assemblies L002

No Activities at this time

AT LARGE

December 1
December 7
December 8
December 24
December 21
December 23

Assemblies R019, L040, 0110, 0236, 0267, 0381, 0554, 0568, 0586, 0705, 0731, 0800, 0813

Assembly 0586, Christmas Party, Jen's Guesthouse, Willow Springs (tentatively)
Assembly 0731, Christmas Party, Boardman Park Stambaugh Room at 1:00 pm
Assembly 0110, Christmas Luncheon, Trattori L'incontro, Astoria, NY at 2:00 pm
Assembly 0705, Annual Christmas Eve Celebration, Buck's residence at 6:00 pm
Assembly 0381, Meeting, Sibley Gardens, Trenton, MI at 4:00 pm
Assembly 0813, Christmas Party, Thirsty Pig, at 5:00 pm

REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR PERSONAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION CURRENT

Please contact our NSS Life Member Services Department at 1-800-488-1890 with any of the following changes:

- MARITAL STATUS • MAILING ADDRESS • BENEFICIARY UPDATES • EMAIL ADDRESS
- IRA MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION REQUESTS • BANK ACCOUNT UPDATES FOR DEPOSITS OR WITHDRAWALS

ANY REQUESTS FOR DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE NSS FOR 2019 SHOULD BE DELIVERED TO THE HOME OFFICE BY: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 2019.

From The President's Desk...



**David G. Blazek, FIC
President, CEO**

Greetings from the desk of the president and on behalf of my family, the Board of Directors and the Home Office staff, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year in 2020. In looking over the Activities at a Glance page from November, there will be many Holiday Luncheons, Parties and activities in the month of December so check them out and plan on attending with your fellow members of NSS.

News of Narodniars

Birthday wishes go out to NSS Directors Sue Ondrejco and Abby Gross, Honorary Tribunal member Sophie Hudak, Home Office staff members Brigid Delien and Cyndi Salat, also to John and Kevin Crowley, Melinda Chojnicki, Annette Stefka, wife of our Board Chair, Joe Stefka and to my wife Fran Blazek and son David W. Blazek. Best wishes to all others celebrating this month.

Wishes go out to Mildred Havir for a speedy and full recovery and to all other members that are ill or injured.

Punography Of The Month:

So what if I don't know the meaning of the word 'apocalypse'? It's not the end of the world.

The Slovaks of America

(continued from last issue)

The children of Slovak emigrants show eagerness for culture and education and the humble parents have made many sacrifices in order that their offspring might be granted opportunities, denied them in their native land. This is evidenced in recent years by the many young Slovak graduates from American Universities and Colleges, entering from thence all the higher avenues of culture and education, such as legal, medical, scholastic and scientific professions, enabling them to cater to and assist their own people. Great numbers have risen from the menial labor to preside over business and manufacturing enterprises and farming, a credit to their respective communities.

In politics the Slovaks have taken active interest, not influenced, but making same decisions for party and principles. Not satisfied to take the proverbial job of "only the policeman" but have succeeded to seats in City Councils, Mayors of Cities, representatives and legislators of State Assemblies.

The Slovaks of Hungary were virtually saved from destitution, this condition brought on by the Magyarizing attitude of the Austro-Hungarian government toward them in the years preceding the world war. Through the accumulation of earnings, the Slovak emigrants could send aid to these starving families, pay up delinquent taxes, debts on farms and homes and materially relieve all financial jeopardy.

Spiritually and mentally the great mass of the Slovak brothers and sisters and parents left behind in the old country could hardly conceive of their human rights and God offered privileges – that Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood was their birthright. But through those in America, schooled in and enjoying these triune blessings, a marked change happened rapidly. Previous to the world war they were instructed to claim their liberty and despise the tyrant. This attitude was evinced by the Hungarian government and many drastic measures were adopted to check the impetus, but of no avail.

A full consciousness culminated in the awakening of all Slovak colonies of the United States with great enthusiasm at the outbreak of the world war. Setting aside all differences of religion, politics or organization adherence, they stood firmly together on the principle of the Allies: Irrevocably to save the world for democracy. Unreservedly they offered their mites and lives for a victory which meant also the liberation of their brothers. By a union with their closest kin, the Czechs under the name of "Czechoslovakia" they joined hands and emerged from that great conflict a happy, free Republic.

In the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the Liberty Bell echoed the words of Thomas G. Masaryk that the Czechs and Slovaks declared themselves a free and sovereign nation and the great American nation, through its illustrious president, Woodrow Wilson, put on the seal of approval and the Trianon Treaty united the two closest tribes, the Czechs and Slovaks, in one free, sovereign country; "The Czechoslovak Republic."

This certainly was the greatest achievement of the Czechs and Slovaks of America. Without their moral and financial support, without their sacrifices of money and blood, the "bloodless revolution" of October 28, 1918 in their native land could hardly have been accomplished. The establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in Europe through the endeavors of their kin in the United States is the greatest achievement of the "Century of Progress"!



A Page From My Notebook...

Hello from **Secretary-Treasurer/CFO Linda Strom**...YES, IT'S REALLY ME! I want to let you all know that I'm doing well and looking forward to the day that I can once again sit in my chair in my office. I want to personally thank each of you for the cards, gifts, flowers, phone calls, letters, homemade food, texts and most importantly prayers. I am so blessed and overwhelmed with the kindness shown to me during this little hiccup in my day to day routine and I hope to be in my office as soon as I get the OK from the Doc. Thank you President David Blazek, Chairman of the Board Joseph Stefka, Jr. and the entire Board of Directors for your continued prayers and patience during this time. In closing I wish each of you a very blessed Thanksgiving Holiday!

2019 3rd Qtr Financial Statement Recap

Statement as of September 30, 2019

| | Sept 2019 | Dec 2018 | | Sept 2019 | Dec 2018 |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Net Admitted Assets: | | | Summary of Operations: | | |
| Bonds | \$1,236,449,571 | \$1,178,134,883 | INCOME: | | |
| Preferred Stocks | 0 | 250,000 | Premium & Annuity Considerations | \$133,526,447 | \$152,103,623 |
| Common Stocks | 3,974,751 | 2,264,456 | Net Investment Income | 41,781,584 | 53,464,000 |
| Mortgage Loans on Real Est | 6,469,563 | 6,360,129 | Amortization of Interest | | |
| Certificate Loans | 990,979 | 1,054,234 | Maintenance Reserve | 350,489 | 458,348 |
| Real Est Occupied by Society | 664,948 | 680,964 | Income Sub-Total | \$175,658,520 | \$206,025,971 |
| Cash on Deposit | 24,034,256 | 8,989,211 | | | |
| Electronic Data Equipment | | | EXPENSES: | | |
| Uncollected Premiums | 142,635 | 186,600 | Death Benefits | \$5,196,702 | \$6,784,483 |
| Investment Income Due | 15,545,607 | 13,983,478 | Matured Endowments | 5,642 | 23,981 |
| TOTALS | \$1,288,272,310 | \$1,211,903,955 | Annuity Benefits | 86,215,970 | 106,541,775 |
| Liabilities & Unassigned Funds | | | Disability Benefits | 6,025 | 9,118 |
| Aggregate Reserve | \$1,146,960,000 | \$1,076,512,000 | Surrender Benefits | 759,713 | 520,118 |
| Deposit-type Contracts | 63,025,927 | 62,738,687 | Interest On Deposit Type Contr | 2,869 | 9,326 |
| Certificate Claims | 325,000 | 425,000 | Increase In Aggregate Reserve | | |
| Commissions Due | 160,000 | 130,000 | for Life Contracts | 69,605,021 | 72,285,000 |
| Refunds Due and Unpaid | 610,000 | 560,000 | Commissions On Direct Business | 3,561,691 | 3,676,084 |
| General Exp Due | 1,600,400 | 1,694,400 | General & Fraternal Expenses | 3,650,651 | 4,534,749 |
| Retained by Society as Trustee | 16,407 | 166,754 | Insur, Taxes, Licenses, Fees | 424,630 | 220,002 |
| Asset Valuation Resv (AVR) | 8,283,600 | 6,947,000 | Expense Sub-Total | \$169,428,914 | \$194,604,636 |
| Interest Maintenance Resv (IMR) | 5,900,848 | 5,426,265 | | | |
| Contingency Reserve | 150,000 | 150,000 | SUMMARY: | | |
| Unassigned Funds | 61,240,128 | 57,153,849 | Net Gain From Operations | | |
| TOTALS | \$1,288,272,310 | \$1,211,903,955 | Before Refunds To Members | \$6,229,606 | \$8,421,335 |
| Surplus Account: | | | Refund To Members | (451,222) | (588,647) |
| Beginning Surplus | \$57,303,849 | \$50,625,917 | Net Gain From Operations | | |
| Net Income | 5,817,000 | 7,134,110 | After Refunds To Members | 5,778,384 | 7,832,688 |
| Change in Net Unrealized | | | Net Realized Capital Gains | 38,616 | (698,578) |
| Capital Gains or (Losses) | 445,339 | (185,079) | TOTAL NET INCOME | \$5,817,000 | \$7,134,110 |
| Change in Nonadmitted Assets | 3,519 | (2,099) | | | |
| Change in Valuation Reserve | (1,336,600) | (269,000) | | | |
| Aggregate Write-ins for Gains | | | | | |
| and Losses in Surplus | (842,979) | | | | |
| Net Change in Surplus | 4,086,279 | 6,677,932 | | | |
| Surplus At Statement Date | \$61,390,128 | \$57,303,849 | | | |

Linda M Strom
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Current Interest Rates Effective July 1, 2018

Optimum 3 2.00%

Preferred 5 3.25%*

Preferred 8 3.75%*

***Rates will be lowering by a Quarter Point effective 1/1/20**

Preferred 7 and Flex earning 4%, these plans are no longer available.
Please contact your NSS Life financial service representative or
Joe Elliott in the Home Office at 1-800-488-1890.



Did you know...

You can add money to almost any
Annuity with NSS, just send us a check.
Any additional funds will not increase the
time period on early withdrawal penalties.

Access your account values 24/7
by going to the website:
www.nsslife.org
and login/register as a member.



ATTENTION - ALERT **REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION**

THE NSS SUGGESTS YOU TAKE YOUR REQUIRED MINIMUM
DISTRIBUTION (RMD) FOR 2019 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

PLEASE FINALIZE YOUR RMD WITHDRAWAL BEFORE
FRIDAY, **DECEMBER 13, 2019**. PLEASE **DO NOT WAIT!**

From the Sales Department...

Greg Felton, CLU, ChFC, Sales Director
Email: gfelton@nsslife.org



Consumers Think Life Insurance is for What?

A recent survey examined people's attitudes about life insurance. Most people only thought about the death benefits of life insurance. Many overlooked the living benefits of cash/loan values and other options.

The following are the 11 most popular responses, in order, as to what people thought their life insurance plan would or could do for them.

1. Pay funeral expenses
2. Provide money for the family.
3. Create a family legacy
4. Pay for long term care expenses
5. Pay for unexpected medical expenses.
6. Provide regular monthly income at retirement
7. Help pay for a child's education
8. Provide income if unemployed
9. Charitable gifting
10. Minimize taxes
11. Pay off debts

Do you think they are right? The correct answer is a resounding yes! Life insurance can do all of these things and more. It may well be the most innovative product ever devised. This simple concept allows you to spend pennies on a dollar and get instant coverage that could be worth thousands of dollars. This money may be used by your family for whatever they deem necessary. The most impor-

tant aspect of life insurance is to have a plan before it is needed. Generally speaking, people don't think about life insurance until something happens; a person dies, marriage, child birth, new home or something else. Call your local NSS representative, or Joe Elliott in the Home Office, for more information and see how life insurance can help you and your family.

Crazy Retirement Facts

Here are a few facts about retirement that may be surprising. Almost 80% of people are worried about their retirement savings. Some are worried they don't have enough while others are concerned whether the money they have will last a lifetime. While these are legitimate concerns here are some crazy facts and/or statistics compiled by the census bureau.

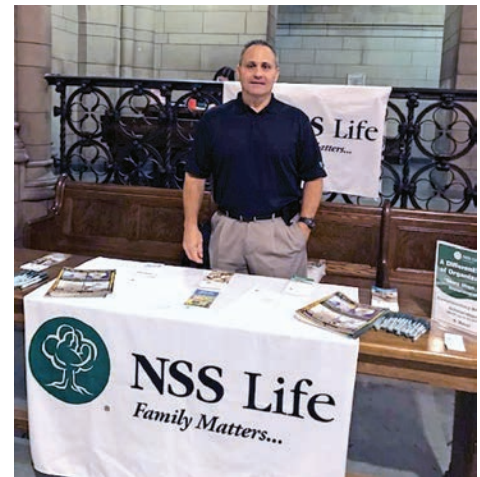
- 1/3 of retirees have zero money saved for their retirement.
- 40% of those retiring have less than \$5,000 saved. The next 10% have less than \$25,000.
- Half of the population cannot handle a \$400 emergency expenditure (without a credit card)?
- After retirement, your Medicare payments, other healthcare (supplement) and long term care costs will continue to increase each year with inflation. You should be prepared for these added costs.

So what is a person to do? The solution is simple. The implementation is difficult. The first thing everyone should do is live within your means. Don't spend all of your money. Save at least 10% or more. Eliminate credit card balances. It is OK to use your card but pay it off each month. Set up a systematic method of saving money. Payroll deduction is the best method to save money. The next best method is to have a certain amount come out of your checking account each month. These automatic plans are great because you don't miss what you don't have. Be sure and take advantage of your company's 401K plan especially the match portion. If they offer any other options look into those too. Sometimes employers will allow you to buy a life insurance option equal to one year's

salary for very little. Check out any other payroll deduction options too.

Finally, take charge and be responsible for your future. Start an IRA, Roth or an annuity account with NSS. Put in as much as you can. There is an old proverb, every journey begins with a single step. We can relate this to saving money for the future. When you invest or save today, you are buying a day in the future when you won't have to go to work. Call for more information and let us help you in the future.

Slovak Day at Pitt



NSS Field Development Manager Jeff DeSantes at our booth for the annual Slovak Day at Pitt on Sunday, November 3, 2019.

Jeff was there to answer questions about NSS fraternal events and product information.



Punography Of The Month:

A bad attitude is like a flat tire, you aren't going anywhere until you change it.

Anonymous

Fraternal Matters...

Pam Blum, Fraternal Activities Director
Email: pblum@nsslife.org



Christmas Eve Books

For those of you wishing to celebrate Christmas Eve in a true Slovak tradition, we have booklets available at the Home Office that we will send to you in time for the holidays. These booklets contain recipes for the traditional Slovak Christmas Eve Supper, a brief family devotion to conduct a service in the home and an explanation about the Christmas Wafers (Oplatky). The Christmas Wafers along with a variety of Christmas Ornaments made in Slovakia are available for purchase at the Home Office.

May the blessings of this holiday season be with each of you. Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year from our family to yours.

Slovak Christmas Fun Facts

- The Slovak Christmas is three days (December 24th-December 26th).
- Christmas Eve (December 24th) is also known as Generous Day/Generous Evening, and is the most important day during Christmas.
- The main Christmas meal is known as the 'Velija' and consists of 12 dishes (the number of dishes symbolizes the number of Jesus' disciples).
- After dinner, presents are opened on Christmas Eve, and are delivered from Baby Jesus, not Santa Claus.
- Christmas trees are kept up until January 6th (the Feast of the Three Kings).
- The Midnight Mass service is the busiest church service of the year.

Looking Ahead

We will be kicking off the New Year with our '20/20 Vision' campaign to support the PVR Scholarship fund! 2020 will be full of events that will help us to maintain this integral part of NSS Life. In order to continue awarding the scholarships to our members - your kids, grandkids, and even great-grandkids - we need to keep the fund sustainable. Along with the calendar of events, any support you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Our Tree of Life, located in our home office lobby, is a special tree honoring those who have made a substantial donation to the NSS Life PVR Scholarship Fund. The following designs are engraved with your name and proudly displayed in the lobby for all to see:

Leaf – Donation of \$250 - \$999

Acorn – Donation of \$1,000 - \$4,999

Stone – Donation of \$5,000 - \$9,999

Perpetual Scholarship – Donation of \$10,000+. A scholarship with your name will be awarded to one of our lucky PVR scholarship recipients. This individual receives an extra \$100 on top of the \$500 given by NSS Life, for going above and beyond and excelling in his/her given areas of interest.

Please keep in mind that any donations to the PVR Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible.

Slovak Christmas Eve Mushroom Soup

- 1-2 lbs. onion, chopped
 - 1 ¼ cups butter, divided (may need a little more)
 - 2 lbs. white mushrooms, finely chopped
 - 1 quart water
 - 10 (7 ½ oz.) cans sauerkraut juice
 - ¼ cup flour
1. Sauté chopped onions in 1 cup butter until golden brown.
 2. Add finely chopped mushrooms to onions and cook until mushrooms are done.
 3. Add water and cans of sauerkraut juice, bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer for half hour.
 4. In a small sauce pan, brown the remaining ¼ cup butter, adding flour to make a roux.
 5. Slowly add some soup juice to the roux, stirring to blend (about 2 cups).
 6. Add roux to soup and cook another 15-30 minutes. Serve.



THREE WISE WOMEN
WOULD HAVE...
ASKED DIRECTIONS,
ARRIVED ON TIME,
HELPED DELIVER
THE BABY,
CLEARED THE STABLE,
MADE A CASSEROLE,
BROUGHT PRACTICAL
GIFTS, AND
THERE WOULD BE
PEACE ON EARTH.

PFA Scholarship Winner



Congratulations to David Wasson, Jr. from Assembly L040, who received a scholarship from the Pennsylvania Fraternal Association which the NSS is a part of.

ASSEMBLY 039 Uniontown, PA

May Christmas prayers of joy, love and peace come to you and your family as you celebrate the birth of the Christ-Child and may the New Year bring gifts of good health and long life.

Just a friendly reminder that we have changed the **TIME** of our "Annual Christmas Party" on Sunday, **December 1st** to 1:00 pm from the usual 2:00 pm.

NSS Board Member Susan Ondrejco and her husband, Rudy will present a program celebration our Slovak heritage along with colorful Slovak dancers.

Each year we chance off a 34" HDTV to some lucky winner. During this party we raise funds for the PVR Scholarship program through a "Silent Chinese/Slovak Auction". Last year we donated \$1,000!! We are looking to beat that amount!!

We have numerous door prizes from the home office and special Christmas giveaways. Please mark down the time change so that you are not late!!

Looking for a unique gift for the Christmas Season. The Slovak Heritage Museum, in the home office has a number of Slovak gifts including CD's, books and the traditional Slovak Christmas wafer (Oplatky). Call 724-731-0094.

Delicious food, great fraternal fun, unique Slovak Dancers; what more could you want?

Our first meeting in 2020 will be on Sunday, **March 8th** at the Eat'n Park Restaurant starting at 6:00 pm. This will be our Annual Lenten Dinner. Come and enjoy the fraternal fellowship and a delicious meal. See you at 1:00 pm on **December 1st**.

John Payerchin
President

ASSEMBLY RO59 Bethlehem, PA

The Advent Season is quickly passing! We prepare for Christ's birth on Christmas! Such a joyous season! Our best wishes to all as we glorify his nativity!

Our last meeting of the year will be an assembly Christmas gathering/meeting at the Keysock home, Bethlehem, PA. on **December 8, 2019**. Additional information, please call 610-262-2045.

Michele Guydan
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 070/C070 Brooklyn, OH

Our Christmas Party and meeting will be held on **December 1, 2019** at Dr. Martin Luther Church, 4470 Ridge Road, Brooklyn, OH at 11:30 am. The meeting will follow the party. Since the party will be catered, please call John or Mary Ann Karkosiak by November 24th at 216-741-6990 so we can plan accordingly. Once again we will welcome any donations of hats, gloves, scarves for the DML Mitten Tree.

If you are able, desserts for the dessert table will be appreciated.

John Karkosiak
Secretary-Treasurer

ASSEMBLY 0110 New York, NY

We will be hosting an annual Christmas luncheon on **December 8, 2019** at Trattoria L'incontro, Astoria, NY at 2:00 pm.

Best wishes to all.

Rich DeSanctis
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0123 Coraopolis, PA

Here we are at the end of another year and it was a wonderful year with many activities and new faces involved in a number of events.

Mary Maniecki has let me know that we are going to have a big turnout for our Christmas Luncheon at Carmody's Restaurant, Neville Island, on **December 15th** at 1:00 pm. That is great to hear. By now, hopefully, all of you have sent your \$10 to Mary. If you haven't, please call her at 412-264-3546 to let her know you are coming. We have to let the restaurant know how much food to prepare. Everyone is to bring their Christmas spirit with them, no Grinches allowed.

After several years of outstanding service to our assembly Mary Maniecki has asked to be relieved of her duties as Activity Director. What a fabulous job she did. Thank you Mary! So it is time for someone in our ranks to step up and take her place. If you have any interest in serving in this position please call me at 724-242-5085 or

see me at the Christmas party.

I want to emphasize again to you parents and grandparents that it is the ideal time for you to get life insurance on your children or grandchildren. Starting the first of the year the insurance rates for children are going up. So give them a Christmas gift of life insurance.

Our assembly will be doing a matching fund event on Saturday, **February 29th**. There is a dinner mystery play in comedic style. This is to benefit the American Legion Auxiliary. This will be held at the Crafton American Legion and members cost is \$15. Actual ticket price is \$30. There is only a limited number of tickets so if you want to attend call Jill Grover at 412-638-7060.

I would like to wish a happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to Joseph & Helen Sobehart. May you have many more happy years together!

Special Merry Christmas wish to John & Audrey Smith!

Wishing each of our members a very happy and blessed Christmas season. May the joy of the coming of Christ child fill your hearts and homes. Don't forget to share your blessings with family, friends and especially those whose life circumstances have not been kind to them.

Merry Christmas!

Bill Knoll
President

ASSEMBLY 377 Bentleyville, PA

Our holiday party will be held on **December 1, 2019** at Cannon's Chop-house, Canonsburg, PA at 3:00 pm.

RSVP at 724-207-3171 (new number) and please bring a dozen of cookies for our annual cookie table.

Suzanne Skrypak
President

ASSEMBLY 381 Grosse Ile, MI

A meeting will be held on Saturday, **December 21, 2019** at Sibley Gardens, 916 West Jefferson, Trenton, Michigan, at 4:00 pm. Please call Joanne Medved at 734-676-2199 to reserve.

Joanne Medved
Treasurer

ASSEMBLY 432 Fairview Park, OH

A meeting will be held on Tuesday, **December 10th** at Tony K's, 841 West Bagley Road, Berea, Ohio at 7:30 pm. Please try to attend.

Shawn Pytel
Publicist & Social Media

ASSEMBLY 588 Slovan, PA

NSS National Fraternal Project

The members of Assembly 588 will be conducting a fundraiser as part of the NSS National Project to benefit the Blessings in a Backpack Program sponsored by the Avella High School Chapter of the National Honor Society. The National Honor Society conducts the Blessings in a Backpack Program as part of their service to the community. The fundraiser will take place from **December 1-15, 2019**.

Annette Stefka
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 731 Lowellville, OH

Our Christmas Party will be held at Boardman Park Stambaugh Room, on Saturday, **December 7th**, 1:00-3:30 pm.

Families are asked to bring a basket filled with goodies or a nice prize for our Christmas Raffle.

Laurie Fox
President

ASSEMBLY 813 Englewood, FL

Our annual Christmas party will be held at the Thirsty Pig on Monday, **December 23rd** at 5:00 pm. Kerry Farrell will handle the cooking chores. For the Christmas party, please call Kerry at 334-718-2416 or Mary Jo Holker at 941-473-0559 five days in advance so we may plan accordingly. You can also call either of them to learn more about volunteering, or to suggest other areas where we can make a difference.

Mary Jo Holker
Secretary

Creating Slovak Christmas Memories

Year after year, we look forward to preparing certain foods, and performing certain activities during the Christmas season. These habits and customs that we consider ordinary, create memories that evolve into traditions.

Slovakia's ancestors are the treasure holders of countless Christmas traditions. Many have lost their meaning in modern times, but others still add beauty and charm to the winter holidays. They are priceless treasures that will help you to feel the warmth, joy and spirit of a truly "magical" Slovak Christmas.

St. Nicholas

On December the 6th, we will celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas. There are far more legends about his miraculous good deeds than there are clear details about his life. Nicholas was quite young when his parents died of the plague leaving him as the sole heir of their vast possessions. He was determined to devote his life, using his inheritance for works of charity. We know that he really did live in the fourth century, that he was the Bishop of Myra (now a part of Turkey), and had been widely honored as a saint since the sixth century. Devotion to St. Nicholas is found in every European country. He became known for his holiness, enthusiasm, and 21 miracles. He is the patron saint of scholars, bankers, sailors, brewers, brides, and robbers among others. Because of his love and charity of the poor as well as the many legends of his good works, St. Nicholas is best known as the patron saint of Children.

In Slovakia, Sv. Mikulaš traveling on foot the evening before his Feastday is accompanied by an ugly chain-rattling devil, and an angel. The angel and devil symbolize the dual forces in a man's nature. Sv. Mikulaš reminds the children that Christmas is a few short weeks away and they must behave themselves or the baby Jesus will not bring them presents on Christmas Eve. In the morning, good little children find their boots or shoes which were placed on the window sill the night before, filled with candies, cookies, oranges, apples, nuts or other dried fruits. The naughty children will find a lump or two of coal, or a potato left by the devil. As we honor the memory of this 4th century Bishop, let us remember he is known for his charity and generosity.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is by far the most awaited day of the Christmas season. Sweet aromas fill the crisp winter air. Clean straw is placed under the tablecloth or on the floor to remind us that Christ was bedded on straw in the manger. In some places, the table legs are also bound with chains to represent the link from Christ's birth to his death, and to show the strength of the family. The family sits down to dinner as the first star rises. Blessed candles are lit as a reminder that Christ is the light of the world. Before the meal begins the house and table are blessed, using a pine bough and holy water. Oplatky or altar bread, broken and dipped in honey, is distributed to each member of the family. Reminding us of Christ's presence among us-the bread of life. The head of the family then dips his thumb in honey and blesses each member of the household by placing a cross upon the forehead, reminding each to keep Christ foremost in their thoughts and praying that harmony will sweeten their lives. It is also symbolic of the sweetness and bitterness of life in the coming year. Honey is believed to have special medicinal properties, so the remaining honey is placed aside to heal wounds or sore throats during the year. Everyone at the table is expected to have at least a bit of each food, and care is taken that not even a crumb is dropped on the floor. A small bit of each food is also fed to the animals. After the meal, the remaining food is left on the table for the deceased members of the family, whom it was believed, would return as "guests" at midnight. In some villages in Slovakia it was also common to fill a bowl with water and silver coins. After the meal, beginning with the oldest child, they would wash their hands in the money to ensure wealth in the coming year. After everyone washes, the youngest child would keep the coins for good luck.

(Continued on page 11)

Slovak Christmas Memories

(Continued from page 10)

Food plays an important part in the Slovak Christmas Holiday Tradition.

Each of the foods are prepared for a reason—to symbolize something, for example:

Wine is served to signify the warmth of Christ's love.

The **mushroom soup** is usually made with sauerkraut juice representing the bitter destiny of Christ..to suffer for us.

Bobalky, small, sweet bread balls are mixed with sauerkraut or poppy seed to assure a plentiful crop.

Fish is an important Christmas Eve dish not only because it was considered a fasting meal but also because the scales of the fish resembled coins, symbolizing wealth.

The actual menu, the preparation and the manner in which the Christmas Eve dinner is eaten will vary from village to village and is greatly influenced by religion.

Perhaps this little bit of information will make your Vilija more interesting and meaningful.

Remember --it is up to us to see that these traditions are carried on!

*God made Christmas happen;
friends make Christmas beautiful;
music makes Christmas festive;
giving makes Christmas joyous;
love makes Christmas complete.*

William Arthur Ward



Home Office Visitors



Mary Ellen, Susan and Dorothy Buck paid a visit to the headquarters of the National Slovak Society in McMurray, PA while on vacation in the area. They are all lifelong members of Assembly 705 in Seelyville, Indiana. The tour of the museum was wonderful.



Assembly L075 Activities

Assembly L075 members volunteered their time to help Life Scout Adam Lazar of Avoca Boy Scout Troop 316 and the last Eagle Scout candidate for Duryea Troop 285 with his Eagle Scout project on July 27th at the Ben Franklin Center in Dupont. Adam's project was done for the Dupont Lions Club. The members along with the troop took out 6,400 old dim light bulbs from 45 snowflake lights that highlight the streets of Dupont during the Holidays and the 8 banners and replace them with new bulbs. They washed the old fixtures and replaced the ones that needed it and then put in the new bulbs.



Members who assisted Adam were: 1st row; Lehrae Ann Edwards Secretary/Treasurer, Allie Lazar, Karen Richardson, Maxwell Edwards and Dominic Piccoletti sitting with Assembly President Gary Edwards. 2nd row: Dorothy Collins, Lucy, Gabriel and Tom Piccoletti, Samantha and Marlin Wesnak R2 President, Eagle Candidate Adam Lazar, Jonathan Kamor, Adam and Matthew Edwards

The assembly held their Fraternal Summer Picnic at the Mercatelli-Segilia Park in Moosic in August. Members were treated to hot dogs and hamburgers cooked by Fraternal Director Bill Wesnak, Jr and Gary Collins.



Members enjoyed the basket raffle and are shown putting their winning tickets in for the drawing and there was plenty of food brought in by the members.

The assembly conducted a matching funds for the Catherine McAuley Center in Scranton. The assembly also purchased a cooler filled with Beach items like chairs, towels, snorkels and games. Lehrae and Dorothy sold tickets at the Luzerne County Fair in September. The center made over \$13,000. Members attended the Region 2 matching funds Bon Appetite for the SPCA at the Wood lawns in Wilkes-Barre on November 3rd and the St. Cats and Dogs fund raiser at the Eagle McClure Hose Co. in Old Forge on November 10th Purse Bingo.

Our members also celebrated Veterans Day with the Veterans at the Wilkes-Barre VA Center on November 17th with a bingo pizza party.

Our next meeting will be held on January 12, 2020 at Terry's Diner, Birney Avenue, Moosic PA at 2:00 p.m. for the Holiday Party.

Assembly 70



John Karkosiak presenting check from NSS Assembly 70 and matching funds to Remember Crisis Center as part of Blessings in a backpack

Assembly 432 Fall Fest Hayride



Thank you to all that came out to our new location for Assembly 432's Fall Fest Hayride! The kids (and even some adults) enjoyed a haunted house, petting farm, and face painting. The afternoon ended with our own private hayride and pumpkin patch visit!

Shawn Pytel
Publicist & Social Media

Assembly 731 Halloween Party

Assembly 731 youth and adults enjoyed their Halloween party at Boardman Park. Dressed in their Halloween costumes, they enjoyed the evening party that included games and refreshments. The night before the Halloween Party, adults only enjoyed a Ghost Tour in Salem, Ohio.



Marion and Jeff Burns with their grandchildren, **Liam and Octavia**



Ruth Burns poses with some of the kids at the Halloween party.

They will gather together again November and at their Christmas Party on December 7th. The Christmas party will be held in the Stambaugh Room in Boardman Park at 1:00 pm. Santa will be there with gifts for the children so it's very important that anyone planning to attend, RSVP to Laurie Fox by the 1st of December.

We will have a raffle at the Christmas Party to raise money with Matching Funds to purchase a swing for Special Needs children to be donated to the Poland Township Park. Families are asked to bring a basket filled with goodies or a nice prize for our Christmas Raffle. A 32" TV will be included in the raffle.

Laurie Fox
President



Assembly 813 News

Assembly 813 has successfully completed their NSS National Fraternal Project, "Blessings in a Backpack." Ruth Hill, Director of St. David's Episcopal Church's Jubilee Center announced we raised \$2,010 which included a \$1500 mini grant to offset expenses and provide additional food for the backpack program. There are 114 children, grades K - 5, at Englewood Elementary School who receive food to go home on the weekends.

We don't want to see any child go hungry, so we also support the Englewood Elementary Lunch Angels as one of our NSS Matching Funds programs. We are rapidly reaching our goal to provide money so that every child gets a healthy meal at lunchtime. We hope to conclude that program next month.

We will continue with our "Save Your Change" program to benefit the seniors in the Brown Bag Program, and the "Toys for Tots" program. Thank you all for your support of these programs which make all of our holidays a bit more special. See you at the Christmas party.

Mary Jo Holker
Secretary



NSS Sales Director, Greg Felton addressing the PA Numismatic Association Convention. A brief talk was given about "Kid Zone" which NSS is a sponsor.



Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance 108th Annual Meeting

The Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance recently held its 108th Annual Meeting at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance is a trade organization for fraternal benefit societies either domiciled or doing business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Currently, seventeen fraternal benefit societies domiciled in Pennsylvania are members of the PFA. The Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance is the largest and most active fraternal alliance in the country. The PFA Annual Meeting, in addition to conducting PFA business, also provides attendees with educational sessions on topics that are relevant to fraternal benefit societies, investments, and regulations.

The National Slovak Society was well represented by delegates at the meeting. Chairman of the Board Joseph Stefka, Jr. served as President of the PFA for 2019 and chaired the meeting; National Sales Director Greg Felton served as Second Vice President for 2019; Director Sue Ondrejco served on the Board of the PFA for 2019. Serving as delegates representing the NSS were President Dave Blazek, Directors Andrea Garbon, Abigail Gross, Sue Ondrejco, John Payerchin, and NSS Underwriter Rick Toth.



The meeting began on Sunday, October 20, 2019, with registration and a fraternal night consisting of a dinner and an instructor led painting session. Several NSS "artists" participated in the painting activity including Joe and Annette Stefka, Greg and Rhonda Felton, Sue Ondrejco, and Andrea Garbon. It was a great evening of fun, laughter, and fraternalism and the paintings looked great!



Educational sessions were held on Monday, October 21st and Tuesday, October 22nd. Each year the PFA President selects a charity and donations are collected from member fraternal benefit societies and associate members to present to the charity. PFA President Joseph Stefka, Jr. chose the City Mission Crabtree-Kovacecek Veterans House in Washington, Pennsylvania, a homeless shelter for veterans as the 2019 Charity. Through generous donations, the PFA was able to present a check for \$5100 to Judi Kovacecek, Capital Campaign Coordinator, for the Crabtree-Kovacecek Veterans House. A banquet was held on Monday evening where the newly elected PFA Officers and Directors were sworn in by Cynthia M. Maleski, President and CEO of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association.



In addition, the 2019 John Jordan Upchurch Award Recipient Douglas Tuttle, President of the Loyal Christian Benefit Association was announced and addressed the attendees.

At the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, PFA President Joseph Stefka, Jr. ceremonially passed the gavel to Virginia A. Holmes, of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, incoming PFA President for 2020. The National Slovak Society will once again be represented on the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance Board for 2020. National Sales Manager Greg Felton will be the first Vice President, Chairman of the Board Joseph Stefka, Jr. will serve as the Immediate Past President, and NSS Director Sue Ondrejco will serve as a PFA Director. President Holmes presented outgoing President Stefka a

plaque for serving as the President of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance for 2019. Our late NSS President Joseph Stefka served as President of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Congress (former name of the PFA) in 1987 making Joseph Stefka, Jr. and his father the only father and son to serve as PFC/PFA president in its history.



Cardigan Day at the Home Office...

NSS Home Office staff celebrated Mr. Rogers Cardigan Day and World Day of Kindness on November 13, 2019. The staff wore their Cardigans in honor of Mr. Rogers and bake cookies to spread some kindness in the neighborhood. The cookies were delivered to Peters Township Meals on Wheels Kitchen. Our homemade treats will be distributed to 168 clients this week with their meals.



PVR Scholarship Fund Donations

In Memory of **Doreen Aveni, Mary Livengood, Richard Mazur & Louis Ulizio:**
 From Assembly 0123..... 80.00
 In Memory of **Regis A Grogan:**
 From Thomas Grogan 1,000.00
 In Memory of **Richard House**..... 20.00
 Donations:
 Joanne & Terry Eldred 50.00
 Catherine & Matthew
 Maiorano..... 15.00
 Justine Wesnak..... 10.00



Real Christmas Tree Facts

While they're growing, REAL Christmas Trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other gases and emitting fresh oxygen. The farms that grow Christmas Trees stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green belts. Often, Christmas Trees are grown on soil that doesn't support other crops.

REAL Christmas Trees are grown on farms just like any other crop. To ensure a constant supply, Farmers plan one to three new seedlings for every Christmas Tree they harvest.

There are about 21,000 Christmas Tree growers in the U.S., and over 100,000 people employed full or part-time in the industry.

It can take as many as 15 years to grow a Christmas Tree of average retail sale height (6 – 7 feet) or as little as 4 years, but the average growing time is 7 years.

OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS October, 2019

| Name | City and State | Date of Death | Assembly |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|
| Abraham, Lucie | North Ridgeville, OH | 01/10/2019 | 0432 |
| Adkins, Dessie | Ravenswood, WV | 07/17/2019 | 0774 |
| Amick, Lou | Point Pleasant, WV | 09/21/2019 | 0774 |
| Barr, Linda | Washington, PA | 09/12/2019 | 0588 |
| Berger, Agnes | Johnstown, PA | 08/22/2018 | 0774 |
| Bovalina, Frank | Burgettstown, PA | 09/17/2019 | 0588 |
| Brown, Leona | Auburn, MI | 07/22/2019 | 0381 |
| Chapman, Donald | Vestaburg, PA | 10/01/2019 | 0377 |
| Cielinski, Janice | Darien, IL | 09/21/2019 | 0586 |
| Colella, Patricia | Pittsburgh, PA | 10/04/2019 | 0100 |
| Cottrell, Edna | Wallback, WV | 08/29/2019 | 0774 |
| Crookshanks, Zada Mae | Ranielle, WV | 09/09/2019 | 0774 |
| Csuy, Velma | Zelienople, PA | 09/27/2019 | 0123 |
| Davis, Charleen | Mason, OH | 05/28/2019 | 0800 |
| DeCarolis, Jr., Louis | Zephyrhills, FL | 08/31/2019 | 0813 |
| DiMarzio, Jr., August | Salisbury, NC | 08/05/2019 | 0123 |
| Domanski, Antonina | Ashley, PA | 10/11/2019 | 0617 |
| Dooley, Walter N | Tipton, MO | 08/16/2019 | 0813 |
| Fassel, Edward | Bethel Park, PA | 03/17/2019 | 0434 |
| Fisher, Shirley S | Waynesburg, PA | 09/26/2019 | 0588 |
| George, Francis | Masontown, PA | 09/27/2019 | 0039 |
| Gionta, Theresa | Pittsburgh, PA | 09/17/2019 | L105 |
| Gottselig, Arlene | Monongahela, PA | 10/02/2019 | 0377 |
| Harris, George J | Ashland, PA | 08/08/2019 | 0774 |
| Hawley, Shirley | Danville, PA | 08/22/2019 | 0617 |
| Hess, Mildred | Columbia City, IN | 09/30/2019 | 0705 |
| Hines, Etha | Linside, WV | 01/16/2019 | 0774 |
| Jahnke, Roland | Griffith, IN | 04/28/2019 | 0586 |
| Johnson, Loretta | Salem, IN | 09/21/2019 | 0774 |
| Johnson, Roy | Cleveland, OH | 12/21/2015 | 0432 |
| Kozlosky, Gloria | Mentor, OH | 09/23/2019 | 0267 |
| Maceyko, Marie | Warminster, PA | 11/03/2017 | L102 |
| Marino, James | Boardman, OH | 08/08/2019 | 0731 |
| Spoto, Martin James | Wheeling, WV | 08/04/2019 | 0774 |
| Nicolaus, Barbara | Fredericktown, PA | 10/13/2019 | 0774 |
| Palchesko, Louise | Sterling Heights, MI | 08/06/2019 | 0381 |
| Petak, Marie | Johnstown, PA | 07/30/2019 | 0774 |
| Pierce, Marie G | Mentor, OH | 09/27/2019 | 0004 |
| Raines, Naomi | Princeton, WV | 09/26/2019 | 0774 |
| Roach, Angelina | Valrico, FL | 06/10/2019 | 0110 |
| Sicher, Catherine | Sebring, FL | 01/24/2019 | L161 |
| Smoljan, Rose | Lake Forest, CA | 10/02/2019 | 0586 |
| Thompson, Ludene | Belleville, IL | 06/28/2019 | 0705 |
| Vance, Evelyn | Princeton, WV | 08/12/2019 | 0774 |
| Weber, Mary Ann | Amherst, OH | 10/08/2019 | 0160 |
| Whetzel, Arvin Don | Mathias, WV | 07/14/2019 | 0774 |
| Whyte, Eugenia | Reno, NV | 06/02/2019 | 0777 |
| Wilson, Jacqueline | Lancaster, CA | 10/15/2018 | 0568 |

IN MEMORIAM

Pearl Zuberka

Recently Monica Anthony informed me that her mother, Pearl had passed away peacefully, in her presence. This octogenarian lived a full and active life almost to the end. Pearl was preceded in death by her husband John, many years ago. Shortly after he died Pearl went to live with her daughter Monica who was also a widow. They were constant companions enjoying trips and activities together. They enjoyed playing cards with other family members. Pearl's family was her love and joy, especially her only child, Monica.

Pearl was Recording Secretary of Assembly L102 of the First Slovak Wreath of the Free Eagle for more than three decades. After her sister-in-law, Margaret Beers retired her secretarial duties to me, we all worked together to make L102 a very active assembly. I could not have wished for more cooperation than I received from these ladies, until FSWFE merged with NSS in 1997. At that time both retired, leaving the Assembly in the very capable hands of National Director, Drew Wesnak and his lovely wife Sharon, I remained as President.

Drew often mentions the hard work and sacrifices of Pearl and Margaret in laying the groundwork for the successful existence of L102, which today is a very highranking Assembly, known for its volunteerism.

We offer our condolences to Monica and her family and we pray that Pearl is enjoying her heavenly reward in peace with God. We are grateful for her life of volunteerism. May she rest in peace for all eternity.

Justine Wesnak
Assembly L102

Margaret Tomaskovic



Margaret Tomaskovic and Joyce Tomaskovic Jann

Margaret Tomaskovic, member of Assembly 586, passed away on October 23. She was Frank Tomaskovic's wife of 60 years, mother of Joyce, Judith, Jean and Frank, grandma and great-grandma to many, sister-in-law of Irene and Joe Tomaskovic Jr. and a dear aunt. Marge was a stay at home mom while her kids were of school age, helping to make a good life for her family. She worked later for many years outside her home only after her children had been raised.

Joyce Jann, Marge and Frank's first child; sister, mother, wife, grandmother and cousin, had been suffering with cancer for years. She was remarkable; a hard worker all her life and all-around beautiful person. Joyce died in her Florida home with her family by her side on October 28, the night before her mother's funeral in Illinois.

Our Assembly 586 offers our sincere sympathy to all of Marge and Joyce's family and their extended Tomaskovic family keeps them all in our prayers.

In other news 586 members voted to make donations to the PVR scholarship in honor of Joe Tomaskovic and Janice Cielinski. We collected lots of items for Operation Support Our Troops, which we designated to be one of our matching funds.

Our Christmas party will be held (tentatively) on December 1 at Jen's Guesthouse in Willow Springs.



This Month in National Slovak Society History

Joseph Stefka, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

December, 1907

Jacob's Creek, a small mining village near Smithton, Pennsylvania, was the site of a coal mine explosion on December 19, 1907. The explosion killed 239 coal miners, of which ten were members of the National Slovak Society. The deceased were members of Assembly 125 of Wick Haven, Pennsylvania Assembly 153 of Finleyville, Pennsylvania, Assembly 587 of Meadowlands, Pennsylvania, and Assembly 330 of Pricedale, Pennsylvania.

December, 1959

Assembly 809 of Windsor Hts., West Virginia, announced an Assembly 809 NSS Youth Basketball League consisting of NSS members ages 8-12. Teams representing Beech Bottom, WV, Short Creek, WV, Bethany, WV, West Liberty, WV, and Windsor Hts., WV would compete in the newly formed league.

December, 1966

Grace Sporka of Assembly 588 of Avella, Pennsylvania, captured the Women's Division Title in the Assembly 809 Bowling Jamboree held on December 10, 1966, at the Rose Bowl Bowling Lanes with a total of 669. Grace's score was the highest score in the Women's Division ever recorded in the history of the Jamboree.

November, 1992

District #11 held its Bowling Jamboree at the Surf Bowl on December 2, 1974. Marlene Glass of Assembly 829 of Racine, Wisconsin, won the Women's Division with a score of 604. Steve Taleck of Assembly 829 won the Men's Division with a score of 608.

A Hibernation Celebration!

Sponsored by Region 5



Saturday, February 8, 2020

Slovak Catholic Sokol Hall

2912 E. Carson St. Southside, PA 15203

11 A.M.

\$10/Adult member, \$5/ Child includes Lunch and all activities

****PVR Scholarship recipients who graduated 2016 thru 2019 will be guests of Region 5**

Deadline for Reservations is Friday, January 17, 2020

Please make checks payable and mail to: NSS Region 5

234 ILION ST.

PGH, PA. 15207

Please indicate number of Adults attending _____ @ \$10 _____
 Please indicate number of Children (under age 10) _____ @ \$5 _____
 Please indicate number of PVR Scholarship Recipients _____ (FREE) _____
TOTAL: _____

*Name _____

* Phone: or email _____

****REQUIRED**

****REQUIRED**

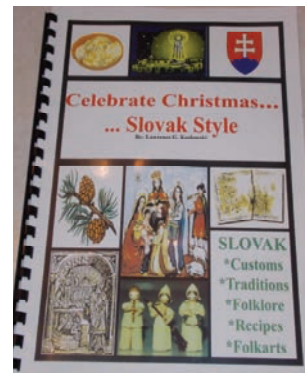
Available from the NSSHM Gift Shop while supplies last!

OPLATKY:

Package of 5 large wafers \$4.00

Small wafer with Christmas Blessing ideal for placing inside Christmas cards. Available in English OR Slovak.

Please specify. \$2.00 ea.



Christmas Slovak Style:

Remembering the Priceless Treasures of Christmases Past and an Inspiration for Christmases of the Future

\$12 (includes postage and handling)

Slovak Christmas CD

Sung and produced by the Pittsburgh Slovaks.

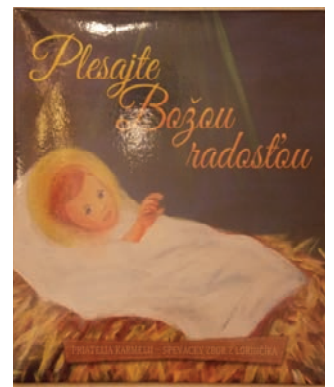
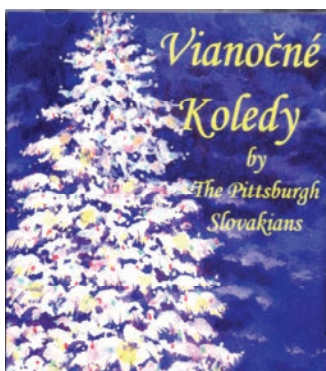
Features 14 traditional carols. \$15.00

EXCLUSIVE! Slovak Christmas CD

Sung and produced by the Carmelite Fathers in Lorinčik,

Slovakia. Features 21 traditional carols.

Limited Supply Available \$15.00





Josef Lada

Pokojne Vianoce: Prichádza čas zázrakov, čas stretnutí, čas nádejí i naplnených prianí. Pre tých, ktorí milujú život, pre tých, ktorí vedia lúbiť, pre tých, ktorí sa vedia usmievať, pre tých, ktorí vedia odpustiť, ...pre tých, ktorí vedia snívať s otvorenými očami a pre tých, ktorí vedia, že Vianoce nie sú len jeden deň, ale po celý rok.

Pokojné, príjemne a radostné vianočné sviatky našim členom a priateľom želá

Hlavný úrad Narodneho Slovenskeho Spolku

Adventné zamyslenia

NEZABUDNI NA NÁVŠTEVU

Zamyslenie: Mária sa ponáhľala k Alžbete. To nám znie celkom povedome. Tiež sa stále niekam ponáhľame, utekáme do práce, z práce, do školy, do obchodu a potom vyčerpaný padáme do postele. Svet sa točí, dni utekajú, je takmer nemožné sa zastaviť. Kedy sme naposledy navštívili našich rodičov, starých rodičov či našich zosnulých? Kedy sme naposledy navštívili Ježiša vo svätostánku? Keď Mária vošla do Alžbetinho domu, Alžbetu naplnil Duch Svätý. Naše návštevy možno nemajú takú moc, ale taktiež dokážu ľudí povzbudiť, potešiť, priniesť im do života niečo nové a nečakané a aj nám môžu pomôcť zastaviť sa v tomto uponáhľanom svete.

Ježišu, Ty si bol so Svojou Matkou, keď navštívila príbuznú. Práve Tvoja skrytá prítomnosť ju naplnila Svätým Duchom. Pomôž nám využiť čas adventu na návštevy našich blízkych. Daj tiež, aby sme nezabudli aj na tie menšie návštevy a každý deň navštevovali ľudí s láskou a ochotou.



POZVÁNKA

Ak radi počúvate na Vianočné koledy a Vinše tie možno počuť v nedeľu počas Vianočnej doby počnúc druhou nedeľou v decembri na rádio stanici WPIT—730 AM od 3-tej do 4-tej popoludni z mesta Pittsburghu. Keď žijete mimo Pittsburghu možno to počuť cestou internetu.

WPITAM.COM a potrebnou kliknúť na "listen live."

DAVNEJŠIE VIANOCE

Ku príprave štedrej večere bolo potrebné upratať celý dom i dvor, napiecť bobaľky, prichistať rybu (kapra), namočiť šošovicu i sušené huby na polievku, atď. Pokiaľ taku prácu vykonávali ženy – chlapi šli zaobstarat' vianočný stromček ktorý sa zdobí v štedrovečerný deň. Vešali sa jablká, cukríky, čokoladové figurky, krásne zdobené guľe a rôzne ozdoby ktoré deti vyrobili v škole.

Pravdaže stromček musel mať všetko lákave hlavne pre deti lebo predstavuje lákavosť našich prvých rodičov Adama a Evu v Raji.

Keď sa už blížilo k večeru prestreli stôl po vychode prvej hviezdy sme zasadali k stolu. Otec rodiny vyvolil jedno z detí predviesť poďakomu motlitbu za všetké dari Božie za všetkých prítomných. Vzal med čím urobil krížik na čelo všetkým a bolo pripitie pohárom vína. Nasledovali oplatky s medom hubová či krupicová polievka ryba, bobaľky atď.

Po večery deti vyšli na dvor pod okno a zaspievali koledu, čím pokračovali po svojich rodinách a znamých až do polnoci kedy všetci šli na polnočnú sv. Omšu.

Veď spevame:

*Povedzte nám pastierovia, Čo ste videli?
Keď ste sa tak o polnoci všetci rozbehli....*

Vianočné darčeky sme našli pod stromčekom po polnočnej omši—lebo Ježiško už prišiel na svet a nás obdaroval.

Vinčujeme Vám radostné a požehnané Vianočné Sviatky, veľa zdravia a lásky v tieto krásne vianočné dni to vám želáme gazdovy gazdinnej i celému vášmu domu.

Pochvalen Buď Pán Ježiš Kristus!



Vianočný Vinš:



*Letí k Tebe darček z neba,
je v ňom všetko, čo Ti treba.
Šťastie, pokoj, láska, neha,
Ježiško má rád aj Teba.
Každú slznú kvapôčku,
premení Ti na vločku.*

Third Place Poetry Contest Winners

Summer

Summer is fun!
This summer I swam, had play-dates, and
went to birthday parties.
I am going to two other birthday parties on
Saturday the 17th with two of my friends,
Juliana and Hailey.
Two weeks ago, Mommy, Jacob, and I
went to Maryland and it took
six hours to get there.
I love summer!

Rose Katricak
C-160, Age 7

Rollercoasters

Racers are racing.
0000000 is what you say
when you look at it.
Laughing up the hill.
Loops up and down.
Entertaining while riding.
Rushing down the hill.
Churning around the bend.
Oh my gosh, that is high.
AAAGGGHHH is what you scream.
Thrilling ride.
Exciting and fun.
Really fun.

Gregory Felton
C- 434, Age 10

Gift of Butterflies

Butterflies are like Angels
They are with you all the time
When we are excited,
we feel them in our tummies
The patterns of their wings are like a
colorful painting.
They spread their joy from flower to flower.
When they fly they are gentle and quiet.
Thank you God for sending us
Butterflies.

Abigail Urban
C-039, Age 13

Secrets

They'll catch up to you
Taunt and hunt you down
You never know what to do
And it starts to pull at a frown
No matter what you do,
It's a burden
You can't escape what's true
It's pounding on your back.
No one to tell
No way you can write 'em down
It's another form of battle
Constantly tearing you apart
Especially when you wanna tell,
Someone you trust
But you have to play your part
Like it's all rehearsed
With a smile
Across your face
Or else it could tear your life apart

Dominique Mahoner
C-774, Age 15



Youth Circle Page

Youth Circle of National Slovak Society • 351 Valley Brook Road, McMurray, PA 15317

2019 Christmas Ornament Contest Deadline: December 15, 2019

We have extended the deadline for the Ornament Contest to **December 15, 2019**. Last chance to create a winning ornament today!

The rules are as follows:

1. The contest is open to all NSS members. In addition, we are inviting our Home Office Staff, and even our Board Members to participate.
2. Entries should be no larger than 5" High; 5" Wide and 5" Deep. The base can be in any shape so long as it stays within the above measurements. You can glue objects to make your ornament decorative (we encourage you to be creative!) Some examples are glitter, ribbon, stars, cotton balls, etc... Please submit original handmade ornaments only. Ornaments made from kits will be disqualified.
3. All entries must include your name, address, age, youth circle number or assembly number and phone number on a separate sheet of paper. Youth members should also list their shirt size (Youth: YM, or Adult: AS, AM, AL, AXL).
4. All winners in each group will have their names appear in the "National News." In addition, a picture of your ornament will appear on the website. All entries will be distributed to a local nursing home to be placed on a Christmas Tree. You can send in more than one ornament for distribution purposes--the more we have the prettier the tree will be! In the event you send more than one, please note which ornament you would like to have judged.

The contest shall be judged under the following categories and prize awards:

| Member Categories: | Prize Awards: |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Frosty Group (Ages 5-7) | First Place - \$25.00 |
| Rudolph Group (Ages 8-10) | First Place - \$25.00 |
| Snowflake Group (Ages 11-13) | First Place - \$25.00 |
| Santa Group (Ages 14-16) | First Place - \$25.00 |
| Adult Group | First Place - \$50.00 |
| | Second Place - \$30.00 |
| | Third Place - \$20.00 |

5. Entries must be mailed, or hand-delivered to the NSS Home Office by the **deadline of December 15th**. Please mail to: National Slovak Society ATT: Ornament Contest, 351 Valley Brook Road, McMurray, PA 15317-3337. BE SURE THAT YOU FOLLOW THE RULES CAREFULLY SO YOU DO NOT LOSE POINTS IN THE JUDGING.

The Legend of the Christmas Tree

Two little children were sitting by the fire one cold winter's night. All at once they heard a timid knock at the door, and one ran to open it. There, outside in the cold and the darkness, stood a child with no shoes upon his feet and clad in thin, ragged garments. He was shivering with cold, and he asked to come in and warm himself. "Yes, come, cried both the children; "you shall have our place by the fire.



Come in!" They drew the little stranger to their warm seat and shared their supper with him, and gave him their bed, while they slept on a hard bench. In the night they were awakened by strains of sweet music and, looking out, they saw a band of children in shining garments approaching the house. They were playing on golden harps, and the air was full of melody. Suddenly the Stranger Child stood before them; no longer cold and ragged, but clad in silvery light. His soft voice said: "I was cold and you took Me in. I was hungry, and you fed Me. I was tired, and you gave Me your bed. I am the Christ Child, wandering through the world to bring peace and happiness to all good children. As you have given to Me, so may this tree every year give rich fruit to you." So saying, He broke a branch from the fir tree that grew near the door, and He planted it in the ground and disappeared. But the branch grew into a great tree, and every year it bore wonderful golden fruit for the kind children.



Thank You's

Dear NSS,

Thank you for the PVR Scholarship which will help me to pay for tuition so I can focus on my education and degree in Graphic Design. Thank you again.

Jacob Karkosik

Could you use a little extra “green?”

Recommender

As a proud member of NSS Life, there is no better time than now to share your experience with family and friends. Best of all, you will receive a cash reward for recommending someone that we issue a policy to. You will receive a \$25 recommender fee (\$10 on the youth term product) for each person that becomes a member.

Recommender Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Prospect Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



Send form to Joe Elliott at the Home Office.

Change of Address

Please use this form to register your change of address for the National News and mail to the Home Office. Upon receipt of this form completed in its entirety, the staff will immediately implement the change. *Thank you.*

Name _____

Assembly No. _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Former Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

DEADLINE FOR PUBLICATION

Please be advised that all articles, notices, etc., MUST BE received by the Home Office no later than the 5th of the month. Every effort will be made to publish the article and photos in a timely manner and space permitting. Also, all articles should be typewritten in regular type.